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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COURSE IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE

By PROFESSOR W. R. HUMPHREYS,

English 24 and 25 have been given in our department every year beginning with 1908-1909. The enrollment, entirely elective, has grown from about forty to one hundred and ninety-five (the present number). One reason which we had for offering the course was that we found many of our students handicapped in their study of English writers by their ignorance of the Bible; and the enclosed quotations, used in examinations in the Bible course, show that I have kept this reason in mind. The Bible course was never intended, however, as a mere feeder of the materials for literary allusion. The lectures given twice a week through both semesters, constitute an introduction to the literature of the Old and New Testaments. We reach the New Testament about the time of the spring vacation. The nature of the lectures is indicated in a general way by the questions which appear on the following sheets, together with the quotations containing allusions.

ENGLISH 24—2-4

I. Compare the two stories of creation as to form, style, and thought; and discuss each as representative of the class of writers from whom it comes.

II. Write freely concerning the Book of the Covenant, and of its relation to other writings.

III. Show definitely that you recognize the Biblical allusions in the following quotations:

(a) *E. B. Browning*: Aurora Leigh

But stay!—who judges?—who distinguishes
Twixt Saul and Nahash justly, at first sight?

(b) *E. B. Browning*: Aurora Leigh

For my part, I am scarcely meek enough
To be the handmaid of a lawful spouse,
Do I look a Hagar, think you?

(c) *E. B. Browning*: *Aurora Leigh*

You feel as conquerors though you did not fight,
And you and Israel's other singing girls,
Ay, Miriam with them, sing the song you choose

(d) *Longfellow*: *The Courtship of Miles Standish*

He thought of Davids' transgression,
Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the
front of the battle!

(e) *Lowell*: *Indian-Summer Reverie*

Where Memory
Wanders like gleaning Ruth.

ENGLISH 24—1-3-5

I. The Book of Deuteronomy; the time of its appearance, its substance and purpose, its likeness and unlikeness to other books, its influence.

II. The method and style of Biblical narration, as illustrated in the story of Balaam and Balak

III. Show definitely that you recognize the Biblical allusions in the following quotations:

(a) *Shakespeare*: *King Lear*

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes.

(b) *E. B. Browning*: *The Seraphim*.

Staring multitudes, whose father Adam was—whose brows
are dark
With his Cain's corroded mark.

(c) *E. B. Browning*: *Aurora Leigh*

He'll have five thousand and five thousand more
Against him,—the whole public,—all the hoofs
Of King Saul's father's asses.

(d) *E. B. Browning*: *Aurora Leigh*

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

(e) *Longfellow*: *Evangeline*

As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its portals.

I. What class of Old Testament writings includes all of the following? What events and qualities have they in common?—The Book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy, Judges, Amos.

II. Arrange the following persons according to their order in time, and identify each in a sentence or two: Benjamin, Jezebel, Balak, Isaiah, Jonathan, Mordecai, Nathan, Naomi.

III. Write freely concerning Hosea, his time, and his book.

IV. Write briefly but definitely on each of the following topics:

- (a) The form of Hebrew poetry, with illustrations if possible;
- (b) Some readings involving the question of foreign marriages;
- (c) The story of Absalom's defeat and death, as an example of narrative art.

V. Show definitely that you recognize the Biblical allusions in the following quotations.

(a) *Dante: Inferno.*

As he whose wrongs
The bears avenged, at its departure saw
Elijah's chariot.

(b) *Christopher Smart: A Song to David.*

Blest light, still gaining on the gloom,
The more than Michal of his bloom,
Th' Abishag of his age.

(c) *Lydia Huntley Sigourney: The Tomb of Absalom.*

What were thy thoughts
When death, careering on the triple dart
Of vengeful Joab, found thee?

(d) *C. A. Fox: The Queen of Sheba.*

O fair she stood, far Sheba's dauntless Queen,

. 'Mid Salem's dazzling towers she stood serene.

(e) *John Keble: Elijah at Sarepta.*

Lavish for Him, ye poor, your children's store,
So shall your curse for many a day run o'er.

- (f) *Richard Wilton*: The Death of Ahab.
By robe or plume or equipage of king
All undistinguished, he eludes the eyes
Of captains bent to o'erpower him or surprise.
- (g) *Robert Browning*: The Ring and the Book.
Who was it dared lay hand upon the ark
His betters saw fall nor put finger forth?
- (h) *Robert Browning*: The Ring and the Book.
Prowess and pride descend the throne and touch
Esther in all that pretty tremble.
- (i) *Charles Dawbarn*: A Cecil in British Politics (Atl.
Mthly.)
He was not popular . . . principally, I think, because he
would not bow the knee to Baal.

I. Show definitely that you recognize the Biblical allusions in the following quotations.

- (1) *Cowper*: The Task
But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
- (2) *Sydney Smith*: Lady Holland's Memoir
You find people ready enough to do the Samaritan, without the oil and twopence.
- (3) *Macaulay*: Essay on Milton
We speak of those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the Heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases or careless Gallios with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom.
- (4) *Ruskin*: Sesame and Lilies
Did you ever hear, not of a Maude, but a Madeleine, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found one waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener?
- (5) *Ruskin*: Stones of Venice
The man who says to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, has, in most cases, more sense of restraint and difficulty than the man who obeys him.

(6) *Ruskin*: The Queen of the Air

The image . . . both for the maintenance of household watchfulness, as in the parable of the ten virgins, or as the symbol of direct inspiration, in the rushing wind and divided flames of Pentecost.

(7) *Ruskins* Fors Clavigera

In many a country, and many an age, women have been compelled to labor for their husbands' wealth, or bread; but never until now were they so homeless as to say, like the poor Samaritan, "I have no husband."

(8) *Shaw*: Heartbreak House

Insurgent men who had become intolerably poor because the temple had become a den of thieves.

(9) *I. A. R. Wylie*: The Silent Room

The foppish old man was talking again. He grew almost lyrical. Yes, by God, there were things that changed a man's life, like the conversion on the road to Damascus.

(10) *L. A. Beck*: Mihintale—A Pilgrimage (Atl. Mthly., Jan. '21)

We know too little of the wisdom of the East. The Magi still journey to Bethlehem, but only those who have the heart of the Child may receive their gold, myrrh, and frankincense.

(11) *Baltimore Sun*: Editorial Paragraph

When women vote, the politicians will honor the widow's might.

II. Set forth any New Testament teachings which seem to you to continue Old Testament teachings; any which seem to be at variance with them.

III. Discuss freely the New Testament books which were written by Luke.

IV. What reasons are there for thinking that Isaiah 40-66 was written later than Isaiah 1-39? Explain the purpose of the later prophet.

V. Compare the narrative style (or styles) of the New Testament with that of the Old Testament.

VI. Give an account of the controversy between Paul and James.

I. What are the main characteristics of the prophetic writings? Illustrate your statement by references to one of the stories of creation, and to the Book of the Covenant. Why were the Hebrews right when they included Judges among the books of prophecy? What ground is there for calling Deuteronomy prophetic?

II. Show that you recognize the Biblical allusions in the following quotations. Be brief but definite.

(a) *Cowper*: Expostulation.

Think on the fruitful and well-watered spot
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
When Paradise seemed still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorched unto perpetual dearth.

(b) *Scott*: Ivanhoe.

Thy lance will be powerful as the rod of Moses.

(c) *August Strindberg*: Comrades.

Axel (to Berta). Yes. I was strong then, but you clipped my strength away, while my tired head lay in your lap.

(d) *Winston Churchill*: Article in Chicago Herald.

Most of us had the idea when the American trumpets blew the walls of the German Jericho would crumble.

(e) *W. R. Thayer*: John Hay's Good Deed in a Naughty World.

At the very end of the nineteenth century, therefore, we find China the Esau among nations. For a mess of potage she had surrendered her birthright to foreigners.

(f) *Detroit Free Press*: Editorial Article.

Which seems to leave the National Temperance Society between the devil and the deep sea. If it does not succeed in transforming the distilleries they will go along making a product that will slay its thousands, and if it does succeed the product will slay its tens of thousands.